

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 6 and 28 have been amended. The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Response is fully responsive to the Office Action dated March 12, 2001.

Claim Objections:

Claim 28 stands objected to due to certain informalities, as set forth in item 2, page 2 of the outstanding Action.

Claim 28 is amended, as attached herewith, to overcome such informalities. Accordingly, withdrawal of such objection is respectfully submitted.

As To The Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner maintains the following rejections:

claims 1-27, 31, 32, 36 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 based on **Watanabe** (U.S. Patent No. 5,717,776) in view of **Sukegawa et al.** (U. S. Patent No. 5,235,165); and

claims 28-30, 33, 34 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 based on **Watanabe** in of **Sukegawa et al.** and **Bradley et al.** (U.S. Patent No. 5,771,071).

AMENDMENT

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Both of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully asserted that Watanabe and Sukegawa fail to disclose, singly or in combination, *a passport data input unit for inputting the contents of an issued passport as data*, as set forth in claims 4 and 15.

In addition, the applied references do not disclose *issuing a passport on a later day*, as now set forth in amended claim 6. The reasons for issuing a passport may be failure of the device, end of stock of new passports, etc. The effects are: no need to wait till the procedure completes, no need to carry the passport (no chance to lose the passport). Completion of the procedure of the passport need not be just a paper or a postcard, but may be a telephone call or an email.

Thus, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully asserted that the prior art fails to teach or suggest recitations of claims 1-37, and request that the Examiner allow these claims, along with the entire application, to issue. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-37 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully solicited.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney, at the telephone number indicated below, to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event this response is not timely filed, Applicants petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 6 and 28 have been amended as follows:

6. (Three Times Amended) A passport transaction apparatus according to claim 3 further comprising:

a receipt issuer unit for issuing receipt authorization data for checking an applicant when a passport is issued to the applicant on a later day; and

a storage unit for storing therein authorization data printed on the receipt issued by the receipt issuing unit, wherein said control unit determines, when the authorization data is inputted by the data input unit, whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not by verifying the authorization to the storing unit, and when it is determined that the applied for passport is to be issued, prints the image of the applicant inputted by said image input unit and contents of the passport on a passport paper previously prepared using the printer unit and issues the passport obtained by printing using said issuing unit.

28. (Three Times Amended) A passport transaction system comprising:

a center accessibly connected to a first database storing therein data for issuing certificates to applicants, registering data for issuance of passports in a second database, and executing examination for issuance of passports; and

at least one passport transaction apparatus connected via a communication lines to said center for processing passport transactions by communicating with said center; wherein said passport

transaction apparatus comprises

a communication unit for communicating with said center;

an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant for a passport;

a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for passport transaction;

a data input unit for inputting data for passport transaction according to the contents of procedure displayed on the display unit;

a printer unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of description on the passport onto a passport paper previously prepared;

an issuer unit for issuing the passport obtained by printing with said printer unit; and

a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by said issuer unit; while the control unit accesses the center using the communication unit, asks the center to make determination as to whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not according to the data inputted by the data input unit, and when it is determined that the applied for passport is to be issued, has an image of the applicant inputted by the image input unit and contents of description of the passport printed onto passport paper previously prepared and the passport obtained by printing issued with the issuing unit; and the center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request from the passport transaction apparatus to the first and second databases respectively by the way of communication with the communication unit and returns a reply as to whether each applied for passport is to be issued or not according to a result of verification.